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Even among the straight lines of the Park I wasn't thinking straight [...]. (Hollinghurst 1998, 5)

1 *Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library[1] is an installation by the American artist Scott Lyman, born in 1986, who has a background in performance studies and graduated with an MA in Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 2014. It was first exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), in London, as part of the Bloomberg "New Contemporaries" 2015 exhibition (25 November 2015-24 January 2016). It consisted of a site-specific, pale pink, neoclassical folly [**fig. 1**]—an enclosed, intimate space for no more than two visitors at a time—in which the 26-minute 16:9 HD video film based on Alan Hollinghurst's 1988 *début* novel, *The Swimming-Pool Library*, was played on a loop. Lyman's video offers a fragmentary vision of Hollinghurst's novel and juxtaposes shots of London—from its official buildings to its "cottages", that is to say the public urinals used as cruising places by some gay men—, scenes from the novel performed by two actors playing the parts of the main characters, William Beckwith and Lord Charles Nantwich, and extracts from both documentary and pornographic films. The eclectic soundtrack ranged from the Queen of the Night's aria, "Der hölle Rache" ("Hell's revenge"), in the second act of Mozart's 1791 *Magic Flute* and Brünnhilde's "Immolation scene" in the

third act of Richard Wagner's 1876 *Twilight of the Gods*, to Bronski Beat's 1984 single "Smalltown Boy".

Fig. 1: Scott Lyman, *Folly/Monument*; *Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library (2014) [installation and 16:9 HD video, 26 minutes], installation for the Bloomberg "New Contemporaries" 2015 Exhibition (ICA, 25 November 2015- 24 January 2016), http://scottedwardlyman.com/#/excerpts-from-alan-hollinghursts-the-swimmingpool-library/

2 Scott Lyman's is the only attempt to date to transpose Hollinghurst's first novel onto the screen,[2] with a much more experimental—less linear and narrative—agenda than Andrew Davies's 2006 mini-series adaptation for the BBC of Hollinghurst's Booker-prize winning 2004 novel *The Line of Beauty*. Adapting *The Swimming-Pool Library* must arguably be a tempting challenge to take up, not least because Hollinghurst's first novel is the one which, in the writer's *oeuvre*, most references cinema, from the evocations of the soundless pornographic films of "The Brutus Cinema" (48-54) to the viewing of (fictional) footage of novelist Ronald Firbank in the 1920s, walking down the streets of the small Italian town of Genzano (285-286). The novel's treatment of cinema has elicited divergent critical interpretations: it has alternatively been seen as "an excessive element that resists integration into the middlebrow poise of *The Swimming-Pool Library*" (O'Leary 142), or as synthesising Hollinghurst's project of "homosexualisation of the novel"[3] by offering the "tribute to Firbank's impressionistic style" (Horton 53), foregrounded in the novel's epigraph, an extract from Ronald Firbank's *The Flower Beneath the Foot* (1924): "'She reads at such a pace,' she complained, 'and when I asked her where she had learnt to read so quickly, she replied 'On the screens at Cinemas'" (Hollinghurst 1998, epigraph; Firbank 500).

3 The aim of this essay is, so to speak, to invert the perspective and examine Lyman's (hitherto unstudied) intermedial translation of Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* and the reading of Hollinghurst's text his work suggests. As Bart Eeckhout has shown, *The Swimming-Pool Library* "offers a richly documented, quasi-anthropological

exploration of the various ways in which 'gay' spaces were constructed in London during the early 1980s" (203-204). I wish to analyse how the video installation by a thirty-year-old American artist re-imagines the London of 1983 and the relationship between urban space and dissident sexualities explored in Alan Hollinghurst's 1988 novel. *The Swimming-Pool Library* has been referred to as an example of "loiterature" (Chambers 207): the reader is made to follow the protagonist Will Beckwith's *flâneur*-like meanderings around London, from West End gentlemen's clubs (Hollinghurst 1998, 33-45, for instance) to Soho basement "adult cinemas" (48-54), from a council estate in East London (168-174) to Russell Square and the late-Victorian Hotel Russell, renamed the Queensberry in the novel (103-108, for instance),[4] an employee of which Will Beckwith has an affair with. Beckwith's wanderings are mirrored in his digressive narrative: for all his taste for the reassuring rectilinearity of the Underground map (46), Will—who is the first-person narrator of the novel—, seems unable to tell his story straight: "Even among the straight lines of the Park I wasn't thinking straight [...]", he writes, in a proleptic double-entendre placed at the beginning of the novel (5). In Lyman's adaptation, one might wonder whether Debord's notion of *dérive* (veering or loitering) has been supplanted by carefully oriented trajectories, a remapping of the novel with a possibly clearer political agenda than the 1988 text. One might also wonder whether the American artist gives a *queer* slant to Hollinghurst's *gay* perspective in *The Swimming-Pool Library*.[5]

4 In a short passage from Lyman's video, adapted directly from the novel, Will Beckwith and Lord Nantwich discuss a "blue" film, which the latter has helped to subsidise; Nantwich explains: "Well, it'll have to be edited and everything of course, which is actually frightfully difficult with blue films, the continuity, putting the close-ups in the right place" (18:23-18:34; Hollinghurst 1998, 246). I wish to use that cinematographic notion of montage—the piecing together of shots—as a metaphor to offer a reading of Lyman's *Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library and of the gay London it maps. I will contend that beyond an aesthetics of discontinuity and fragmentation, Lyman's piece—thereby mirroring Hollinghurst's novel—weaves an intricate web of relationships, between past and present, between time and space and that, in a playful and queer mode, it blurs the lines between the inside and the outside, the intimate and the monumental, the individual and the collective, questioning our own position or "situational identity" as viewers and London *flâneurs*, and fostering a "situational aesthetics" whereby the viewer is taken into a specific space, through an artistic *mise en scène*.

Fragmentary Cityscapes/Fragmented Lives

5 What is first noteworthy about Scott Lyman's transposition of Hollinghurst's *Swimming-Pool Library* and of the metropolitan experience it dwells on is a sense of fragmentation, which is close to Walter Benjamin's attempt "to think about the fragments, rather than the unifying, overarching narratives of urban modernity" in his *Arcades Project* (Benjamin quoted in Eeckhout 214), and close as well to the central metaphor of the mosaic in *The Swimming-Pool Library*. One of the key moments in the novel is indeed when Will visits Charles Nantwich's house and when the older man shows him a Roman mosaic in the cellar, a relic of ancient Roman baths (Hollinghurst 1998, 79-82). The cover art by Russell Mills for the original edition of the novel drew attention to that

central image of the mosaic, by juxtaposing pieces from a Roman mosaic and Roman architectural designs against a blue background evoking a swimming-pool. Discontinuity reads as an image of the gay lives the novel plans to tell, characterised by duplicity, omissions and silences[6] and of the gay London that it maps, with its public spaces and secret haunts. The sense of fragmentation in Lyman's film—something which the very title, *Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's The Swimming-Pool Library*, emphasises—also reads as an echo of Hollinghurst's tribute to Ronald Firbank in the novel, to the camp, digressive and elliptical style of the author of *The Flower Beneath the Foot*, whose narratives are often akin to "mosaic[s] of bright fragments" (Hollinghurst 2006, quoted in Letissier 2013, §19).

6 Holding a mirror up to Firbank's texts and Hollinghurst's novel, Lyman's transposition pieces together various kinds of images and is based on abrupt, incongruous disjunctions and visual *non-sequiturs*, thus recalling the spirit of camp defined by Jack Babuscio as relying on ironic contrasts (Babuscio 20). The film opens on a series of seemingly unrelated shots of buildings and places in London, following one another in relatively quick succession, taking the viewer from the West End to the City and referring to different points in the narrative: the fountain and statues (stone urns and a water nymph, carved by John Thomas in 1861) in the Italian water gardens (in Kensington Gardens) described in the first chapter as the "dismal Italianate garden" with its "half-hearted baroque fountain" (Hollinghurst 1998, 5) and highlighting the centrality of the water imagery in the novel—first an establishing shot, then a series of close-ups on the statues (0:12-0:18)—; a set of shots of official buildings, including a low-angle view of the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales (0:43), near St Paul's Cathedral—metonymically sending back to Lord Nantwich's time in prison for public indecency in the 1950s—;[7] images of the neoclassical Admiralty Arch between Trafalgar Square and the Mall (0:47-0:56), the façade of the ICA on the Mall (0:59-1:03) and a tilt down on Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square (1:05-1:37). While emphasis is placed on the cold geometry of neoclassical columns, on the verticality of towering buildings (often shot using low-angle views), and on the stone and bronze bodies adorning a grey and empty monumental London,[8] an alternative, more subversive outlook is also hinted at through the insistence on phallic forms (from the beak of the swan in John Thomas's statue in the Italian gardens to the various shots of Doric and Corinthian columns) and the omnipresence of nude male bodies carved in stone.

7 The video then goes to juxtapose dramatizations of some passages of the novel (3:32-7:08, 15:56-19:25, 24:42-26:00), shots of people dancing in a nightclub[9] to 1980s synthpop (1:28-2:07, 23:23-24:41), footage from documentary films on "cottages" in London (14:44-15:50; 21:07-23:10) and on ritual ceremonies in Africa (12:05-14:24), excerpts from pornographic movies (2:36-3:20, 19:26-20:30), as well as from the 1933 musical film *42nd Street* (23:23-24:41). It often resorts to the technique of crosscutting, for instance alternating in a sequence shots of Arthur, Will Beckwith's young black lover, dancing in Will's flat (see **fig. 3**) and of a stagnant pond or pool in the countryside (9:57-12:03) (see **fig. 2**). In other words, *Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's Swimming-Pool Library* hinges on a certain number of apparent discontinuities and dichotomies: the oppositions between the cold perfection of statues and the vitality of flesh and blood bodies dancing or having sex, between brightly-lit sequences and others plunged in darkness, between crude pornographic images and dream-like

pastoral landscapes, between the old and the new. Several of the cityscapes in Lyman's piece lay stress on the juxtaposition of old and new buildings—one of the salient features of London's urban space—, for instance the contrast between the 1902 Central Criminal Court of England and Wales and a more modern building adjacent to it (0:45).

8 Likewise, the soundtrack juxtaposes the old and the new, and so-called "high" and "popular" cultures, thus somewhat reminiscent of musical mash-ups, shifting as it does from operatic arias by Mozart and Wagner to 1980s synthpop singles, such as "Bolero (Hold me in your arms again)" by the German androgynous singer Fancy (Manfred Alois Segieth) (1:27-2:07; 9:28-9:43). We move sometimes seamlessly from classical to pop music, when, for instance, the end of the Queen of the Night's aria, "Der hölle Rache" ("Hell's Revenge"), from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, in Maria Callas's version, accelerates and blends in with the introduction of the synthpop song "Bolero" (1:27). The transitions can also sometimes be quite abrupt: there is, for instance, a swift switch from the beginning of Bronski Beat's 1984 song "Smalltown Boy"—an iconic song of the 1980s, tackling key issues in LGBTQ+ culture, such as homophobia in British society, forcing the "I" of the song to leave his small provincial town for London—to Brünnhilde's aria in Act III of *The Twilight of the Gods* (3:21). Yet those seemingly disparate sounds end up cohering and delineating a camp vision of London at a particular point in time.

Continuities: Cityscapes, Soundscapes, Timescapes

9 The effect created by the heterogeneity in Lyman's film's soundtrack is not merely bathetic: it pays tribute to Hollinghurst's "connoisseurial appreciation of everything from cocks to haute cuisine, arses to architecture" (Alderson 43) and is part of Lyman's strategy of suggesting continuity behind apparent discontinuity, as Hollinghurst's novel does. For instance, in Lyman's film, the thread linking the scene of Brünnhilde's immolation at the end of Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods*[10] and the song "Bolero" by Fancy is the idea of twilight and apocalyptic landscape. "Come to the twilight zone" (09:20-09:45), Fancy sings, while Brünnhilde's immolation corresponds to the very end of Wagner's *Ring Tetralogy*: Brünnhilde rides into the fire on her horse, flames flare up in the Valhalla and, as the curtain falls, the Rhine overflows its banks, and the Gods of the Valhalla are consumed in flames. That apocalyptic finale is certainly to be related to Hollinghurst's novel,[11] which starts in the summer of 1983, namely just before the AIDS epidemic[12] at that—retrospectively reconstructed—transitional point between a period of carefree hedonism and arguably one of the darkest times in the history of the LGBTQ+ community in the twentieth century.[13] In Lyman's film, Will Beckwith, who stands, to a certain extent, as an emblematic figure for that era, explains in voice-over towards the beginning:

> Will [voice-over]: My life was in a strange way that summer. I was riding high on sex and self-esteem. It was my time, my *belle époque*. But all the while with a faint flicker of calamity, like flames around a photograph, something seen out of the corner of the eye. Little did I know that it was the last summer of its kind there was ever to be. (2:08-2:33; adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 3)

10 Hollinghurst's text has been slightly reshuffled here, to insist on the idea of finality (by placing the phrase "the last summer of its kind there was ever to be" at the end and not, as in the novel, after "that summer"), an idea which is also ironically present through the French phrase "*belle époque*", a retrospective chrononym dating back to the

1930s and employed to contrast with the horrors of the Great War. The sense of impending doom is later corroborated on through Nantwich's words in voice-over: "[...] [M]y dream [...] showed how all closures, all endings, give warning of closures, greater yet, to come" (9:13-9:20, adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 250).[14] In Will's evocation, the reference to "riding" and the words related to fire ("flicker", "flames around a photograph"[15]) might also, in a camp way, cast the character in the part of a new Brünnhilde. A sense of camp irony is also perceptible when the upbeat song "I'm young and healthy", from the 1933 musical film *42nd Street* contrasts with the aging Lord Nantwich's having a fit in a public lavatory; the cheerful tune implicitly stands as a bitter counterpoint to the oncoming AIDS epidemic which was to take a heavy toll, in particular among men of Will Beckwith's generation (23:25-24:34).

11 Lyman's film—like Hollinghurst's novel—brings together the voices of two generations of gay men by staging scenes of dialogue between Will Beckwith and Lord Nantwich about gay life in London before the 1967 Sexual Offences Act (which decriminalised homosexual acts between men in the UK). Those conversations suggest the continuity—rather than the gap—between past and present:

> Nantwich: It's always gone on, of course. We had little private bars, sex clubs, really, in Soho before the war, very secret. And my Uncle Edmund had fantastic tales of places and sort of gay societies in Regent's Park, a century ago now, before Oscar Wilde and all that, with beautiful working boys dressed as girls. (24:40-25:10, adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 246-247)

Such continuity harmonises with Ackroyd's vision of London: "[...] the ancient city and the modern city literally lie beside each other; one cannot be imagined without the other. [...] These relics of the past now exist as part of our present" (Ackroyd 2001, 778).

12 That layering of—and connection between—past and present is present in Lyman's film, when for instance it broaches the subject of the English capital with its past colonial Empire. The artist resorts to analepses, in which Nantwich evokes his time as a district commissioner in the Sudan in the 1920s through a conversation with Will Beckwith (04:30-07:07, adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 239-242), thus enabling the reader to draw parallels between Will's and Nantwich's lives. Britain's past colonial ethos, which is epitomised by Nantwich (what Vlitos calls Nantwich's "*seigneurial* attitude" [24]) and whose traces appear in the images from London in Lyman's video—for instance through the shots of the Admiralty Arch, a reminder of the country's past as a maritime power (0:47-0:56)—, resurfaces in Will's present fetishizing of black bodies—apparent in the film in the point-of-view shots underscoring the character's voyeuristic gaze on his black lover Arthur's dancing body (1:31-2:02; 10:00-11:20) (see **fig. 3**). In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Hollinghurst unwittingly seems to endorse a form of economic, neo-colonial oppression as far as eroticism is concerned, which is also apparent in his treatment of the character of West Indian Leo, Nick Guest's first lover in *The Line of Beauty* (2004). Lyman, on the other hand, does not seem to have such an ambivalent approach: he offers, more clearly than Hollinghurst does, a critique of those ideologically problematic aspects of gay life both past and present—the eroticising and stereotyping of the "racial other"—, [16]whilst also pointing to his own personal political vision, as an American from central Virginia, a place particularly marked by the violent history of slavery.[17]

13 In the structure of Lyman's film, two dreams—featuring fantasised spaces—echo each other. The video stages Will Beckwith's fantasy of returning to the "swimming-pool library", the slang name Will and his schoolmates had given to the changing room of

the outdoor pool where they would convene for sexual trysts, standing in the character's present as a metonymy for a pastoral state of gay innocence (09:44-12:02; adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 140-141), far removed from 1980s London, and transposed onto the screen through a static shot on a seemingly abandoned, moss-covered outdoor pool or pond (11:19-12:02) [**fig. 2**]:

> Will: I still dream, once a month or so, of that changing-room. In our retrograde slang it was known as the Swimming-Pool Library, and then simply as the Library, a notion fitting to the double lives we led. Sometimes I think that shadowy, doorless little shelter—which is all it was really, an empty, empty place—is where at heart I want to be. (11:30-12:02; adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 141)

Fig. 2: Still from Scott Lyman, *Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library (2014) [11:19-12:02], http://scottedwardlyman.com/#/excerpts-from-alan-hollinghursts-the-swimmingpool-library/

14 In a mirror image, the evocation of Nantwich's recurrent dream, based on the circumstances of his arrest for public indecency and subsequent prison sentence, shows how the public urinal (or "cottage")—where he is seeking sexual partners—turns into the place of his fall from grace (08:30-09:20). In both cases, a code word is used to refer to the *locus amoenus* for sexual encounters, testifying to the duplicity imposed by heteronormative society. In both cases as well, the pastoral mode is evoked.[18] Will's fantasy is based on an elegiac evocation of an alleged era of gay bliss, possibly envisaged from the narrated I's perspective, writing at a time when AIDS was decimating the LGBTQ+ community. Moreover, the very word "cottage" is a camp subversion and re-appropriation of an architectural term referring to a small country house, used to talk about the experience of cruising for casual gay sex in the city, displacing and relocating the pastoral in the urban space; the activity or practice known as "cottaging" (seeking sexual partners in public lavatories) was "no doubt named after the plain single-storey toilets that in part resembled the simplest cottages in Arcadia" (Ackroyd 2017, 212)[19].

15 The concept of "phantom images" discussed by Georges Didi-Huberman in *The Surviving Image* may perhaps help to account for the timescape created by Lyman in his

adaptation of Hollinghurst's novel. Elaborating on Warburg's concept of *Nachleben* (survival or afterlife), Didi-Huberman defends a conception of time—and of art history—that is non-linear, dynamic, based on untimely returns and resurgences, notably surfacing through forms and gestures. One of the ways in which Lyman's video connects space and time is through the motif of dancing. Particularly arresting, in that respect, are the documentary images from African all-male ritual ceremonies—involving covering one's body with ashes, dancing and wrestling—to the sound of the finale of Richard Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods* (12:05-14:26). The selection of those particular images—and possibly of the soundtrack—is indicative of Lyman's political agenda. The footage chosen is indeed by Leni Riefenstahl, the German female director and photographer renowned for her propaganda films exalting the Nazi regime and Aryan masculinity (for instance in the 1938 *Olympia*, about the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games). Riefenstahl lived from 1962 to 1977 among the Nuba tribe in the Sudan, produced two photographic books inspired by that experience *The Last of the Nuba* (1973) and *The People of Kau* (1976), and also filmed the Nuba.[20] Wagner was also famously appropriated by the Third Reich for ideological purposes. Lyman's message is therefore quite clear: he denounces a form of racial stereotyping inherent in gay culture, both past and present, and the neo-colonialism implied in the fetishizing of the racial other.

Fig. 3: Still from Scott Lyman, *Folly/ Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library (2014) [c. 10:58], http://scottedwardlyman.com/#/excerpts-from-alan-hollinghursts-the-swimmingpool-library/

16 What also strikes me in Lyman's film is the resurgence of certain gestures and forms, reminiscent of Warburg's *Nachleben*: the dancing body, the circle and the serpentine line of beauty, which stand in contrast with the straight lines (and conspicuous political agenda). In one of the final sequences (23:20-24:40), the film cross-cuts in an increasingly fast pace between shots of Lord Nantwich having a fit in the "cottage" (an event occurring at the very beginning of the novel [Hollinghurst 1998, 7-8]), of men having sex in a public lavatory, of the same 1980s nightclubbers as at the beginning of the film, and an excerpt from the musical *42nd street* featuring the upbeat song "I'm young and healthy" as well as Busby Berkeley's dance number for the film, based on complex geometric patterns of circles and rings. An implicit link is suggested between the ash-covered bodies of the Nuba ritual ceremonies, the dance number from the 1933

musical film, young black Arthur dancing in Will Beckwith's flat [**fig. 3**] and the clubbing scene, which features a pale young man who dances somewhat manically and whose face is daubed with red lipstick. A sense of circularity and of non-linear time is evinced through the return of the same images (the footage of the 1980s nightclubbers, of the men in the "cottage", the images of dancing, performing bodies), connecting different spaces and times. I would add that Lloyd Bacon's *42nd Street* belongs to the genre of the backstage musical—a musical with a plot set in a theatrical context—, and is one of the several narratives and shows-within-the-show in *Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library, framed and contained within the site-specific "folly" created by Lyman for the Bloomberg "New Contemporaries" 2015 exhibition.

Embedded Narratives and Oscillating Lines: *Camp* London

Fig. 4: Scott Lyman, *Folly/Monument*; *Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library (2014), detail from the architectural installation, http://scottedwardlyman.com/#/excerpts-from-alan-hollinghursts-the-swimmingpool-library/

17 The architectural installation, entitled *Folly/Monument* [**fig. 1 and 4**], inside which the film *Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library was shown in the context of the Bloomberg 2015 "New Contemporaries" exhibition at the ICA, seems to me to encapsulate the playful oscillations characterising Scott Lyman's transposition of the urban landscapes and situational identities depicted in Alan Hollinghurst's novel, blurring the lines between the inside and the outside, the intimate and the monumental, the individual and the collective. It also epitomises Lyman's conception of camp as a "politicised aesthetics" used as "a tactic [...] to subvert dominant, i.e. white, heteronormative culture" (Interview with Ben Walker), paying homage to Hollinghurst's own use of camp in *The Swimming-Pool Library* and, like Hollinghurst,

placing himself in the filiation of Ronald Firbank, whilst tackling such subjects as homophobia both historically and in the present, in a queer mode.

18 First of all, that architectural installation is a "folly", that is to say a fixture associated with landscape garden architecture, from the start destabilising the conventional nature/artifice opposition. English landscape gardens were indeed often carefully designed to look natural, and "garden follies" were frequently imitations of Greek or Chinese temples, Egyptian pyramids or ruined Gothic abbeys, diverted from their original functions and used as decorative, picturesque elements. Moreover, Lyman's "folly" is displaced, as it has been erected not in a garden but within the exhibition room of a museum space, itself situated in the centre of London. The architectural style of that "folly" is neoclassical: its straight lines and geometrical patterns echo those of the neoclassical buildings shown at the beginning of the film, such as the Admiralty Arch, or the ICA inside which the "folly" was exhibited. It may slightly disturb the visitors' expectations, however, as it is—surprisingly for a neoclassical building normally associated with whiteness—pink, a proud re-appropriation and reversal of a formerly stigmatising colour, connoting effeminacy and degeneracy, in the case of the Nazi pink triangle, for instance.[21]

19 The interplay between the inside and the outside, between Lyman's video film and the installation in which it is displayed, is further evidenced by the two motifs on the folly's entablature (see **fig. 4**). Those are borrowed from the façade of the neoclassical, Palladian eighteenth-century Casino at Marino, a garden pavilion outside Dublin, designed by the architect Sir William Chambers, and on which Lyman had worked when at Central Saint Martins.[22] The frieze on the entablature features *paterae* or shields, represented by three embedded circles, maybe foregrounding the prevalent motif of circularity in Lyman's film and echoing the shows-within-the-show it encompasses. The second motif is an ox skull, on whose horns festoons of fruit and leaves are suspended. Those *bucrania* (bovine skulls, sometimes connected by floral or drapery swags), taken up by Chambers for the Casino at Marino, are traditional features of the friezes in classical buildings, such as the interior of the enclosure wall in front of the sacrificial altar of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome, a monument consecrated in 9 BC, dedicated to Pax, the Roman goddess of peace.[23] Those skulls allude to the ancient ceremonies of sacrifice, as sacrificial cattle were decorated with garlands of fruit and flowers. Significantly, in Lyman's film, the very same *bucranium* as the one on the "folly" appears on the façade of the house of Lord Nantwich (3:31)—the sacrificial victim of a homophobic society—, thus creating mirror-effects between the content of the film and the installation that contains it. It also of course ties in with the novel's archeological dig for a gay Roman London, a vestige of which—a mosaic of Roman boys swimming—is in the cellar of Lord Nantwich's house (Hollinghurst 1998, 80).

20 Once inside the viewing pavilion, the visitor finds him/herself in a white cubicle, a (water) closet, looking like a miniature replica of one the "cottages" shown in the film and inside which a good part of the action takes place (9:10-9:40, 14:25-15:50; 20:56-24:41). Yet like the Casino at Marino—which changes scale between exterior and interior (it looks quite small from the outside)—, Lyman's modest-sized "folly" embeds many narratives and opens onto multifarious aspects of gay London.[24] While watching the video, the blank space becomes commensurate with the nightclub in the film, a possible tongue-in-cheek reference to George Michael's 1998 video for his song "Outside", made after he had been caught having sex in public toilets in Beverly Hills

and in which the lavatories morphed into a nightclub. Being "inside" is also in English an informal manner of referring to a prison sentence. Lyman's "folly" could thus also recall Nantwich's time in jail and Oscar Wilde's cell C.3.3 in Reading: the homophobia of which Nantwitch was a victim in the 1950s—when he was tried and sent to prison for public indecency—is evoked in his diaries (Hollinghurst 1998, 248-260). It echoes Oscar Wilde's 1895 trials, his indictment for "gross indecency", and *De Profundis*, the long letter Wilde wrote in prison to his lover Lord Alfred Douglas (Horton 38-39). In Lyman's film, several shots of the Old Bailey, often in low-angle view, act as reminders of the criminalisation of homosexuality until the late 1960s (0:43, 07:20-08:12) and of the oppression the LGBTQ+ community has been a victim of. The installation also turns the viewer into a peeping Tom, a gay male spectator in one of the Soho basement pornographic cinemas referred to in the film: the video stages instances of voyeuristic gazes and *mise-en-abyme* effects, when, for example, the cameraman filming the ongoings in a "cottage" is himself filmed (9:30), or when Lyman's movie crosscuts between a black-and-white American pornographic film and another "blue" film in which the onlookers are having sex in an "adult cinema" (19:26-20:30).[25]

21 That "folly", that small, intimate space for two visitors at a time, is also a "monument", a building erected in remembrance of somebody or an event (the word "monument" comes from the Latin *monere*, to remind).[26] In that particular instance, Lyman's work elicits a reflection on the relationship between space and the fashioning of identity and, through a focus on a handful of individual characters and stories, reconstructs and commemorates a collective history—characterised by violence, secrecy, gaps and omissions—, and seeks to foster a sense of community. The tension between the levity and flippancy suggested by the word "folly" and the solemnity associated with the term "monument" (implying historically endorsed memory) perfectly encapsulates Lyman's project: using camp humour to pay tribute to *The Swimming-Pool Library* and the gay lives it evokes and pleading for an alternative investigation of a past which is out of joint.

22 Taking his cue from Hollinghurst's novel but slightly shifting the perspective, Lyman's *Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library queers the London cityscape, destabilising or questioning, through camp humour and playful editing, the binaries between high and low, fragmentation and cohesion, past and present and, possibly, politics and aesthetics. It underlines the extent to which "phantom images"—from a more or less recent past—haunt the present gay London and shape our vision of the city and our situational identities as London *flâneurs*. It also reconfigures camp style as a potentially political tool[27] to subvert norms, re-appropriate and refashion an ever-shifting urban space, thus tracing "lines of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari), creating new trajectories, ones that both take stock of the past and ceaselessly reinvent London.

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NOTES

1. The trailer for the film is available on the artist's website, http://scottedwardlyman.com/excerpts-from-alan-hollinghursts-the-swimmingpool-library/ (last accessed 14 January 2019).
2. In a webchat organised by *The Guardian* in October 2017, Hollinghurst explained that a three-part adaptation of *The Swimming Pool Library* was written by Kevin Elyot in the early 1990s for the BBC but that it was unfortunately never filmed, https://www.theguardian.com/books/live/2017/sep/27/alan-hollinghurst-webchat-post-your-questions-now (last accessed 14 January 2019).
3. Hollinghurst takes up the notion of "homosexualisation of the novel" in his 2006 lecture on Ronald Firbank: "By making the novel a structure of bright fragments, Firbank had aestheticized it, and in the aesthetic realm the normative claims of morality are relaxed. Firbank's difficult inconsequential manner is part of a bigger subversion of the novel, and of what is in many ways a homosexualisation of the novel" (Hollinghurst 2006, 15).
4. This is quite possibly a reference to the Marquis of Queensberry, the father of Lord Alfred Douglas and, thus, to the trials of Oscar Wilde, which started with Wilde's prosecution of Queensberry for libel, and led to the Irish writer's indictment for "gross indecency" and his two-year prison sentence.

5. In his introduction to *Sex and Sensibility in the Novels of Alan Hollinghurst*, Alex Mathuray underscores "the seeming disjuncture between [Hollinghurst's] aesthetics and his politics" (4) and raises the question of how Hollinghurst's work might "be useful for [...] repoliticising the queer present" (4). Hollinghurst's "homosexualisation of the novel" in *The Swimming-Pool Library* (producing a history—or archeology—of successive generations of gay men in Britain) can be thought to rely on an essentialism at odds with the destabilising, "troubling" dimension inherent in queer theory, with which the novelist seems to have "an allergic relation" (Rivkin 81). I would argue however that the novel does have a queer potential—notably in its disruption or questioning of the past/present dichotomy, its suggestion of a non-linear, queer temporality (see Edelman and Freeman)—, a queer potential which Lyman's video might help to bring to the fore. I would like to thank warmly the reviewers of my essay for that suggestion and for all the other insights, which I have done my best to include in my final version.

6. In the novel, Lord Nantwich's "blanks" and failing memory during his conversations with Will Beckwith may be seen as symbolic of that progressive erasure of the past. According to Richard Dellamora, the "loose end" of the novel "suggests that the gaps in historical understanding can never be fully closed" (Dellamora 173). Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child* (2011) returns to the topic and ultimately underlines the impossibility to get to the truth of a person's existence, the unknowability of past lives. That idea is also at the core of Hollinghurst's interview with famous biographer Hermione Lee (Mendelssohn and Flannery 191-207).

7. The novel includes in chapter 11 a passage from Nantwich's diary, evoking his six-month prison sentence (248-260). The Old Bailey appears again in Lyman's film (07:20-08:12), shot using a tilt down mimetic of what Nantwich refers to as his "fall" (Lyman 7:58; Hollinghurst 1998, 249).

8. At that point in the film, Will Beckwith refers in voice-over to his two years on the staff of the "grandiose but otherwise doomed" *Cubitt Dictionary of Architecture* (0:47-1:06, adapted from Hollinghurst 1998, 3). Architecture and architectural identities is one of the main interests of the artist, Scott Lyman. In the 2016 video *Pink Empire*, he explores and questions the legacy of the neoclassical landscape garden (trailer available on https://vimeo.com/202544917 [last accessed 14 January 2019]).

9. In the novel, the nightclub is aptly named "The Shaft" (Hollinghurst 1998, 4; Lyman 01:55), presumably short for Shaftesbury Avenue in Soho, but also a hint at sexuality (a shaft is a slang word for a man's penis) but also at architecture (a shaft can refer to a column, especially the main part between the base and the capital).

10. In the novel, The Crépuscule des Dieux (in French in the original) is ironically the name of a restaurant (Hollinghurst 1998, 118).

11. Brünnhilde's immolation makes its way in the novel as a passing reference: Will and his friend James listen to that scene from Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods* while getting drunk during one of their early meetings at Oxford (Hollinghurst 1998, 17). Of course, the eschatological perspective of Wagner's opera leads to a form of regeneration and redemption—the burning of the Valhalla leads to renewal, the twilight of the Gods is the dawn of a new era—while the prospects are much gloomier in Hollinghurst's novel.

12. AIDS is never explicitly mentioned in the book or in the film. The first known case of a person dying of an AIDS-related disease in Britain is Terrence (Terry) Higgins (in July 1982), but 1983 is the year when an increasing number of cases of AIDS started being diagnosed. *The Line of Beauty* also begins in the summer of 1983, while *The Stranger's Child* (2011) starts during the so-called "Edwardian summer" of 1913, the (mythified) carefree period before World War 1.

13. In choosing music by Wagner, Lyman might also have in mind the supposed link between Wagnerism and effeminacy, a prevalent idea at the *fin de siècle*, as epitomised for instance in Aubrey Beardsley's drawing *The Wagnerites* (1894), which pictures the audience of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* as being composed of women and effeminate men. See http://

collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O746771/the-wagnerites-drawing-beardsley-aubrey-vincent/ (last accessed 14 January 2019).

14. The idea of the end of an era might also be alluded to through Mozart's Queen of the Night, who, in *The Magic Flute*, is the representative of an old world of obscurantism that is doomed to disappear.

15. The fire imagery also recalls the Queen of the Night's words as heard in Lyman's film: "Hell's revenge cooks in my heart / Death and despair blaze around me", she sings, trying to talk her daughter Pamina into murdering Sarastro. Of course, the very name of the character may also account for the choice of that particular aria, queen being an English slang word to refer to a homosexual man.

16. For more details on the question of race in *The Swimming-Pool Library*, see John McLeod, "Race, Empire, and *The Swimming Pool Library*" (Mendelssohn and Flannery 60-78) and Paul Vlitos, "Homosexualising the Novel: Alan Hollinghurst, Ronald Firbank and *The Swimming-Pool Library*" (Mathuray 13-33), in which is explored the dialogue between Hollinghurst's novel and Firbank's works, around the eroticisation and fetishizing of racial difference. In the novel, Nantwich entertains a form of feudal relationships with black people, taking advantage of his money and superior social position, getting them jobs but also casting them in pornographic films, a contradiction Will points out to him (Lyman 17:30-17:38; Hollinghurst 1998, 245).

17. In a 2016 interview, Lyman discusses the architectural legacy of Thomas Jefferson in his native area and draws attention to the fact that that architectural identity (what is termed "Jeffersonian classicism") is "inherently related to [...] the history of slavery in the US", https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/art/61321/the_truth_in_architecture__scott_lyman#.WwvQbcguDrI (last accessed 14 January 2019).

18. On the use of the pastoral in Hollinghurst's second novel, *The Folding Star* (1994), see Lassen, and on queer pastoral in Hollinghurst's third novel, *The Spell* (1998), see English.

19. The noun "cottage" to refer to public lavatory is documented as having been in use in the Victorian period; its use as an exclusively queer slang term dates back to the 1960s. Matt Houlbrook explains that there had been a queer "sexual mapping" of London for centuries: in 1928, Emlyn Williams had heard of an antique dealer nicknamed "Miss Footsore" who had mapped London urinals, calling them "comfort stations of the cross" (51). Peter Ackroyd explains that the first "queer city guide" was perhaps the 1937 *For Your Convenience: A Learned Dialogue Instructive to all Londoners and London Visitors*, supposedly written by one Paul Fry (a pseudonym for Thomas Burke) and published by Routledge, a guide which investigates the most prominent lavatories in London in the company of a chirpy young man (Ackroyd 212). Significantly, in *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Will first meets Charles Nantwich in a "cottage" (Cleminson 262).

20. In her 1975 review of the *The Last of the Nuba*, Susan Sontag sees the book as further evidence of Riefenstahl's attachment to Nazi ideology (http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1975/02/06/fascinating-fascism/ [last accessed 14 January 2019]). The 2000 documentary film by Ray Müller, *Leni Riefenstahl: Her Dream of Africa* includes period footage of the Nuba by Riefenstahl.

21. There may also be an interlinguistic pun on the word "folly", bringing to mind the French slang word *folle*, the equivalent of the English slang word "queen" to refer to a gay man.

22. Scott Lyman also exhibited paintings inspired by the Casino at Marino for his degree show at Central Saint Martins, see http://scottedwardlyman.com/central-saint-martins-ma-fine-art-degree-show/ (last accessed14 January 2019).

23. Another famous *bucranium* is the one on the Temple of Vespasian and Titus (80 AD) in the Roman Forum. The frieze was depicted in Antoine Desgodetz' *Les Édifices antiques de Rome* (1682), which became a source for the *bucranium* image. Thomas Jefferson copied this frieze for his parlor at Monticello and for the parlor in Pavilion VIII at the University of Virginia, a fact which had probably not escaped Scott Lyman, an artist hailing from central Virginia. The motif of the *bucranium* was also popularised thanks to Andrea Palladio's *The Four Books of Architecture* (1570),

which had much impact in eighteenth-century Britain. Among the leaders of the Palladian movement was Sir William Chambers, who produced many public and private works in the Palladian spirit, and whose influence was spread through his *Treatise on Civil Architecture*, first published in 1759 and expanded in later editions. For more details on *bucrania*, see Loth.

24. In so doing, Lyman's installation recalls the very structure of Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library*, in which the diary of Lord Nantwich is embedded, making the novel a two-tier narrative, bringing together and connecting (gay) past and present.

25. The passage in Lyman's film is an evocation of the gay porn cinema "The Brutus" where part of the action of the third chapter of *The Swimming-Pool Library* takes place (Hollinghurst 1998, 48-54).

26. Lyman's "monument" also bears a kinship with the "tomb in Arcady" as (ironically) pictured by Aubrey Beardsley in his 1896 *Et in Arcadia Ego* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aubrey_Beardsley_-_Et_in_Arcadia_Ego_(1901).jpg (last accessed 14 January 2019), a pen-and-ink drawing in which an elderly dandy approaches a pillar surmounted by a garlanded urn which "may suggest a classicizing soup tureen", according to Erwin and Gerdna Panofsky.

27. Of course, the camp sensibility as defined by Susan Sontag in her seminal 1964 essay "Notes on Camp" does not necessarily imply political commitment. Yet I would argue that in Lyman's case camp humour is a way of taking a stance on the ideological and political issues raised by *The Swimming-Pool Library*.

ABSTRACTS

This essay focuses on the video installation *Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library, by American artist Scott Lyman, first exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, as part of the Bloomberg "New Contemporaries" 2015 exhibition. The viewer entered a site-specific, pale pink, neoclassical "folly"—an enclosed, intimate space for no more than two visitors at a time—, in which a 26-minute film offering a fragmentary vision of Alan Hollinghurst's 1988 *début* novel was played on a loop. This essay analyses the way in which Lyman's video installation re-imagines the London of 1983 and the relationship between urban space and dissident sexualities explored in Alan Hollinghurst's 1988 novel. It argues that beyond an aesthetics of discontinuity, based on abrupt, incongruous contrasts, Lyman's piece—thus mirroring Hollinghurst's novel—weaves an intricate web of relationships between past and present, notably through its soundtrack and the motif of dancing: Lyman's cityscape is turned into a soundscape, reconfiguring the gay London mapped by Hollinghurst. This essay finally contends that Lyman's piece, in a playful and queer mode, blurs the lines between the inside and the outside, the intimate and the monumental, the individual and the collective, questioning our own position or "situational identity" as viewers and London *flâneurs*.

Cet article a pour objet l'installation vidéo de l'artiste américain Scott Lyman, *Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's* The Swimming-Pool Library, présentée pour la première fois à l'Institute of Contemporary Art de Londres, dans le cadre de l'exposition « Bloomberg New Contemporaries » de 2015. Le spectateur pénétrait dans une « folie » néo-classique rose pâle conçue spécifiquement pour l'exposition – un espace clos et intime pour seulement deux spectateurs en même temps –, dans laquelle était diffusé en boucle un film de 26 minutes offrant une vision fragmentaire du premier roman d'Alan Hollinghurst (1988). Cet article analyse la

manière dont l'œuvre de Lyman réinvente le Londres de 1983 et la relation entre espace urbain et sexualités dissidentes qu'explore le roman d'Alan Hollinghurst. Ce travail montre qu'au-delà d'une esthétique de la discontinuité, fondée sur des contrastes abrupts et incongrus, l'œuvre de Lyman – reflétant de la sorte le roman de Hollinghurst – tisse un réseau complexe de relations entre le passé et le présent, en particulier à travers sa bande-son et le motif de la danse : le paysage urbain se fait paysage sonore, reconstruction imaginaire du Londres *gay* cartographié par Hollinghurst. Cet article souligne enfin que l'œuvre de Lyman s'amuse, sur un mode *queer*, à brouiller les frontières entre l'intérieur et l'extérieur, l'intime et le monumental, l'individuel et le collectif et interroge notre propre position et « identité situationnelle » de spectateur et de flâneur londonien.

INDEX

Mots-clés: installation vidéo, cinéma, sexualités dissidentes, camp, paysage urbain, paysage sonore, fragmentation, continuité, Londres, queer
Keywords: video installation, cinema, dissident sexualities, camp, cityscape, soundscape, fragmentation, continuity, London, queer
oeuvrecitee Swimming-Pool Library (The), Folly/Monument; Excerpts from Alan Hollinghurst's The Swimming-Pool Library

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